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Migration from East Pakistan (1951-1961)

(Contributed)

It is obvious from the phenomenal increases in' the populations of Assam, West Bengal and Tripura in the 1961 Census that they have received migrants from East Pakistan. What has been the extent of this migration?

This question will not be satisfactorily answered until Indian Tables relating to sex, age, birthplace, periods of continuous residence, and a few other characteristics are available.

Hut the. Provisional Population Totals, district by district are now available and the Population Census Commission of Pakistan has also published with commendable promptitude its Census' Bulletin No. L

The provisional totals published for each district in East. Pakistan make possible a few surmises on the extent of migration out of East Pakistan to the neighbouring States of India on-either side.

THE percent increase of population in the whole of Pakistan for the ten years, 1951-61, has been 23.7. The figures are given below .

The Federal Territor y of Karachi is presumably the metropolitan area of Karachi city and its growth has lo be left out of reckoning. East Pakistan's sex ratio, although quite low, is. however, better than West Pakistan's or Pakistan's as a whole. Yet the former's decennial rate of growth has been appreciably lower than West Pakistan's. A scrutiny of the district figures of East Pakis- tan will show whether or not the growth rate has been uniformly lower than the average for West Pakistan, or whether there are dis- tricts of exceptionally low growth which have depressed what might have been a higher average for East Pakistan.

It will appear from Table 2 that 8 out of a total of 17 districts have each shown an increase more than the decennial average for Pakistan as a whole, and a ninth is very close to it. It is, therefore, clear that if the remaining eight districts of East Pakistan had shown an average increase of 25 per cent, or that which obtains for West Pakis- tan, the decennial average increase for Pakistan would have probably exceeded 25 per cent. The homoge- neity of the population of East Pakistan would ordinarily argue in favour of a fairly uniform rate of natural growth and fail to explain the current sharp troughs and crests from one district to another unless we assume that the districts wit h appreciably low rates of increase, have suffered from out-migration during the decade.

Let us find out what the popula- tion in the last eight districts in Table 2 would have been in 1961 had they grow n at a uniform rate of 25 per cent during 1951-61.

The States of Assam and West Bengal and the Union Territor y of Tripur a have shown unprecedented increases in their population during 1951.61. The figures are shown in Table 4.

Table 3: Probable Population in 1961 of Eight Selected District of East Pakistan Had They Crown at 25 per vent during 1951-61

District	Population 1961 Assuming 25% growth (000's)	Actual Population 1961 (000's)	Difference between (2) & (3)
Bogra	1,601	1,573	28
Mymensingh	7,247	7,016	231
Khulna	2,600	2,450	150
Faridpur	3,400	3,179	221
Bansal	4,557	4,257	300
Comilla	4,746	4,380	366
Sylhet	3,831	3,493	338
Noakhali	2,845	2,384	461
Total:	30,828	28,732	2,096

Table 2: Districts of East Pakistan Arranged in Decreasing Order of Percentage Growth, 1951-61

District	Population (000V)		Percent growth
	1961	1951	1951-61
Chittagong Hill Tracts	386	288	34.0
Kushtia	1166	887	31.5
Rangpur	3797	2929	29.6
Jessore	2199	1708	28.7
Chittagong	2980	2318	28.6
Rajshahi	2814	2214	27.1
Dacca	5103	4090	24.8
Dinajpur	1710	1379	24.0
Pabna	1957	1587	23.3
Bogra	1573	1281	22.8
Mymensingh	7016	5798	21.0
Khulna	2450	2080	17.8
Faridpur	3179	2720	16.9
Bansal	4257	3646	16.8
Comilla	4380	3797	15.4
Sylhet	3493	3065	13.9
Noakhali	2384	22.76	4.7

Table 1: Population of Pakistan, 1951-61

	Population (000's)		Sex Ratio	Sex Ratio	Percent increase
	1961	1951	1961	1951	1951-61
Pakistan	93,812	75.866	903	888	23.7
West Pakistan	40,815	32.583	877	868	25.3
East Pakistan	50,844	42.063	917	909	20.9
Federal Territory of Karachi	2,153	1,220	—	—	76.5

Table 1: Increase in Population during 1951-61 in Assam, West Bengal & Tripura

State	Population (000's)		Percent Increase	Sex Ratio	Sex Ratio
	1961	1951	1951-61	1961	1951
Assam	11,860	8,830	34	877	877
West Bengal	34.967	26,302	33	879	865
Tripura	1,141	639	79	931	904
Total	47,969	35.772	34		
Difference:	12,197				

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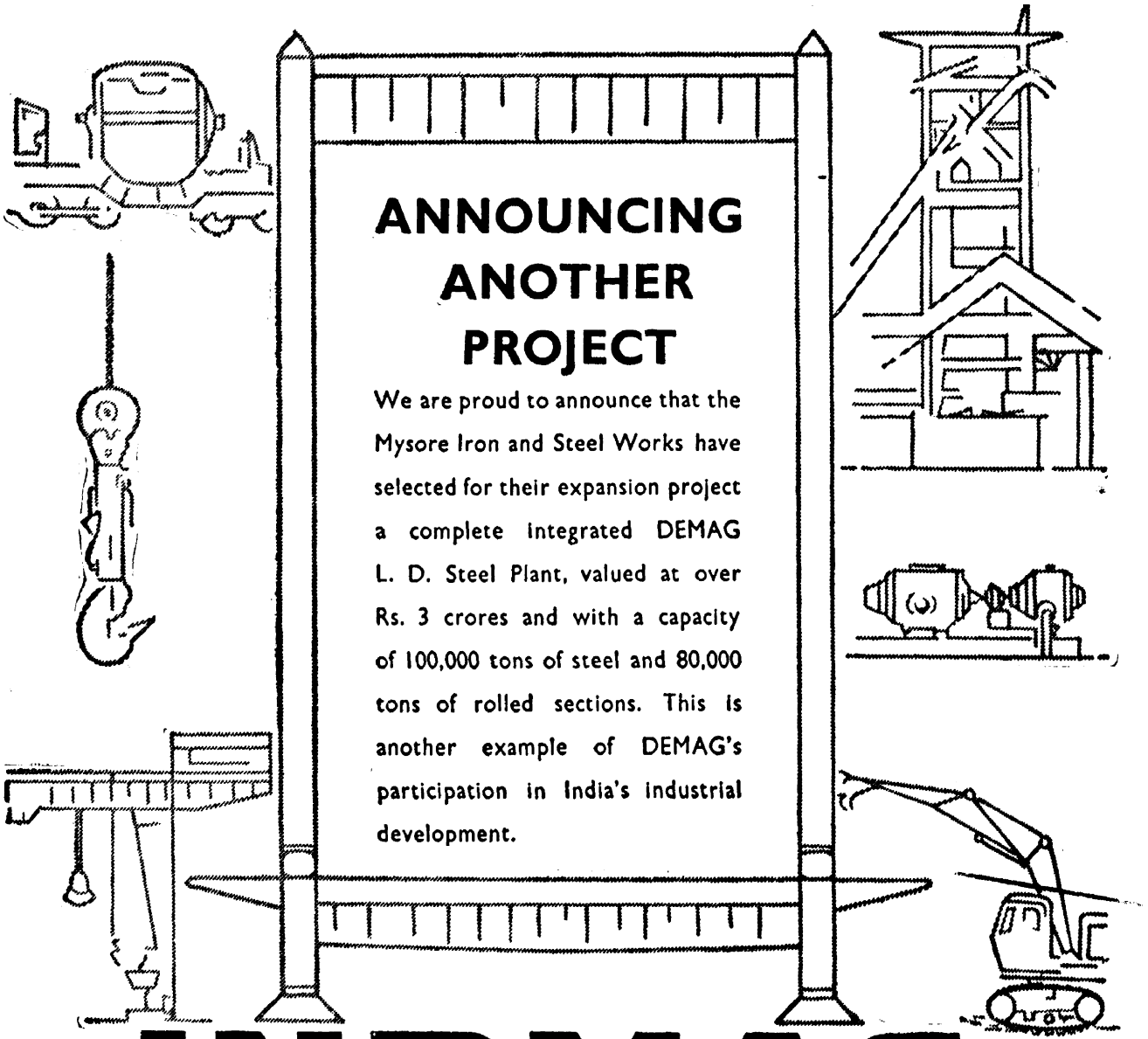

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Since Tripura and West Bengal have improved their sex ratio between 1951 and 1961 while Assam has remained constant, it may be reasonably deduced that migration into these States from East Pakistan has been more in terms of whole families than otherwise.

Pattern of Immigration

The pattern of immigration into Assam and West Bengal has always been of a complex nature since 1901. Indeed, immigration may be held partly responsible for the low sex ratio in the two States. On account of the variety of her industries and the complex demands for labour, the determination of the entire migrant population into West Bengal during 1951-61 must await the publication of sex. age. birth-place and duration of residence tables for that State. Administrative statistics on the influx of displaced persons into West Bengal from East Pakistan are reported as in Table 5.

Table 5: Administrative Statistics on the Influx of Displaced Person from East Pakistan into West Bengal-1951-61

Year	Number
1951 (post-Census to end of	
1952	477,186
1953	60.647
1954	103,850
1955	211,573
19S6	246.840
1957	9,13.1
1958	4,283
1960	8,629
1961 Cup to February 1961)	1,450
Total	1,123.591

This compares with an influx of 2.104.241 displaced persons into West Bengal at the Census of 1951. One may reasonably argue that this figure of 1,123,591 does not represent all the migration that took place from East Pakistan into West Bengal during 1951-61, because it is possible that it does 'not include those persons who had come away to join their families which had set themselves up on their own or with the help of the Rehabilitation Department at an earlier period. A certain and perhaps not inconsiderable proportion again, which has moved in with valuable movable property, especially ornaments, must have taken care to avoid the scrutiny of check-posts. Still others might have avoided them, because they lacked proper exit permits or visas. This figure, again, certainly does not include the sizeable Muslim population which had left West Bengal on the eve of the census of 1951, which was counted in East Pakistan but missed in the census of West Bengal in 1951, but later returned to West Bengal as soon as apprehensions were allayed.

While any increase in Tripura beyond its reasonable natural increasy (say 20%), or a figure of 375.000 during the decade may be said to have been almost entirely due to immigration from East Pakistan and the natural increase of that migrant population, the same cannot be said for Assam which, like West Bengal, has recruited its labour in plantations, oil and construction industries from other parts of India, too. Eel us accept as correct the figure of 1.123,591 for West Bengal or in round figures 1.124.000. Residually. Assam's share of migrants from East Pakistan works out at 597.750 or 598,000. This is, of course, on the assumption that the premises for Table 3 and the administrative statistics of the influx of displaced persons from East Pakistan into West Bengal are acceptable. This figure of 598,000 for Assam works out at 6.77 increase on her 1951 population. leaving 27.58 (34.30 — 6.77) per cent for other causes inclusive of natural increase and better coverage.

Changes in Sex Composition

Let us have a look at the changes in sex composition of the districts mentioned in Table 3 from 1951 to 1961. Table 6 gives the sex ratios in 1951 and 1961.

Table 6 shows very clearly that the proportion of males in the population that has migrated from the eight districts must be appreciably higher than that of females to enable a sex ratio of 915 in 1951 to rise to 943 in 1961. For. clearly this steep rise cannot have been due entirely to natural causes in the course of one decade, unless it is assumed that there was large scale under-enumeration of females in East Pakistan, particularly in 1951.

Table 6: Sex Ratios in 1951 & 1961 in the Districts of East Pakistan

District	Sex Ratio	
	1961	1951
Bogra	955	935
Myinensingh	929	903
Khulna	907	912
Faridpur	956	928
Barisal	949	913
Comilla	958	927
Sylhet	931	913
Noakhali	974	905
Sum of 8 District	913	915
Remaining 9 Districts	917	900
Fast Pakistan	932	909

The sex ratio among displaced population counted in 1951 in West Bengal was 877, The general sex ratio for 1951 for the State was 865. The general sex ratio in 1961 for the State is 879. Until the sex composition of the population of all migrants into West Bengal is tabulated it would he hazardous to guess what the sex composition of 1.121,000 officially registered refugees would he. Granting that the sex ratio would be higher than the average for the State we may assume it to be around 885 to accord with the observed differences in 1951. For Tripura, we may assume for the total of 375.000 a sex ratio that would be the weighted mean between 1951 and 1961. Similarly for a population of 597.750 for Assam. The totals, therefore, work out as in Table 7,

If we added the population composition and sex ratio on the 1961 population of the eight districts of Fast Pakistan, where increases much below the average have been observed, to make the total up to 25 per cent above the 1951 population, then the sex ratio in 1961 for the eight districts with 25 per cent increase on 1951 would he 939 instead of the observed ratio of 943. This (939) would mean a percentage increase of 2.62 during 1951-61 on the sex ratio of 915 for the eight districts in 1951 and is closer to 2.53 which

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Table 7: Possible Sex Composition of Population That May Have Migrated to Assam, West Bengal and Tripura from East Pakistan

State	Total	Male	Female	Sex Ratio
Assam	597,750	318,460	279,290	877
West Bengal	1,124,000	596,286	527,714	885
Tripura	375,000	195,210	179,790	921
Total	2,096,750	1,109,956	986,794	889

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is the percentage increase in the sex ratio of East Pakistan and is per- haps a more acceptable figure than the recorded percentage increase of 3.06.

This note merely attempts a very rough connection between the high increases in Assam, West Bengal and Tripur a observed in the 1961 census count and the low increases observed in certain districts of East Pakistan. Geographical pro- ximity , observed migrations in the past, size of migration, and close- ness of sex ratio suggest that migra- tions into Assam may have largely occurred fro m Mymensingh, Comilla and Sylhet. migration into Tripur a largely from Noakhali, and migra- tion into West Bengal principally from (he other five districts of East Pakistan.

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